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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes and presents instructions and background for five popular Bulgarian folk dances. The document is part of an ethnic heritage teaching unit on folk arts of the Bulgarian people. The objective of the project is to help American students in elementary, junior high, and high schools understand and appreciate Bulgarians and their culture. The document is presented in eight chapters--one chapter devoted to each of the five dances (Daichovo, Eleno Mome, Pravo Horo, Paidushko Horo, and Ruchenitsa), chapters presenting an overview of Bulgarian folk dances and rhythms, and a concluding chapter explaining how to learn irregular rhythms. For each dance, information is presented on pronunciation of the dance name, background, rhythm, tempo, group formation, sequence of steps and movements, and measures and counts. (DB)

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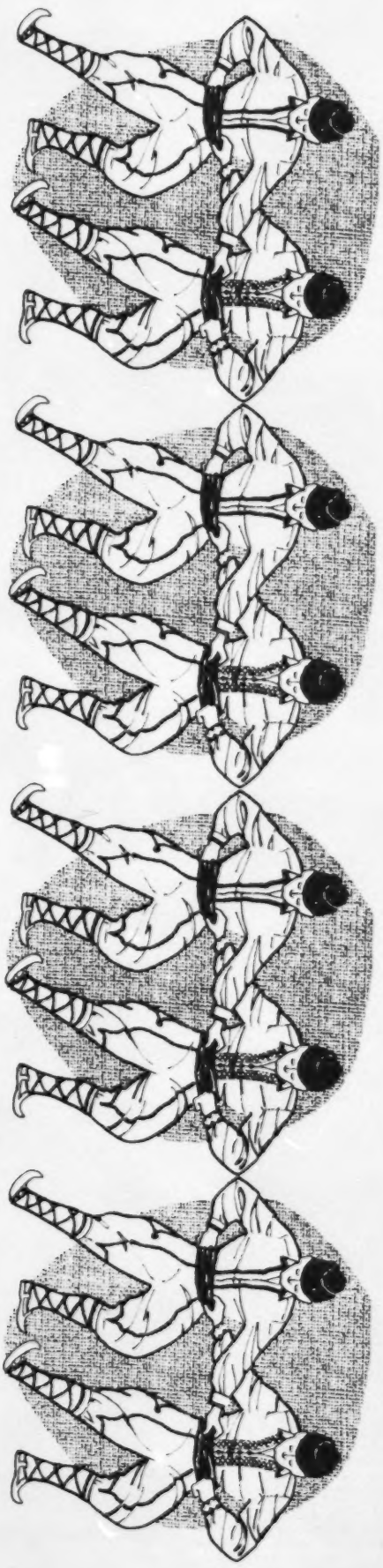
BULGARIANS
DANCES



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BULGARIAN FOLK DANCES

Folk dances form an important part of Bulgaria's national culture. The wealth of rhythms and melodies and the great variety of figures, steps and rapidity of movements demonstrated in the chain dances or HOROS, embody the creative genius handed down from generation to generation.

Until recently, the HORO was danced every Sunday and holidays, all over Bulgaria, by young and old. Even today, folk dancing is still a beloved entertainment among Bulgarians on wedding days, at country fairs, regional festivals, and big national festivities. Many dances are connected with various rituals and customs. Presently, in every region of Bulgaria, there are local HOROS and versions of widely known types of dances which reflect the local taste and character of the people.

The names of some dances and tunes refer to the town or village they come from: RADOMIRSKO, KULSKO, etc. Other names originate from a person's name: DENJOVO, GANKINO, DAJCOVO, etc. Often, dances are related to the milieu in which they are danced or indicate a craft guild: GRANCARSKO HORO (Potter's Dance), KASAPSKO (butcher's), KALAJDZISKO (tinsmith's), etc.

The 2/4 beat is quite common in Bulgarian folk music although the most characteristic rhythms are the ones which are the foundation of many unequal beats such as: 5/16 (PAJDUSKO), 7/16 (RACENICA or CETVORNO), 9/16 (DAJCOVO or GRANCARSKO), 11/16 (GANKINO or KOPANICA), 13/16 (ELENINO, KRIVO SADOVSKO, etc.), 15/16 (BUCIMIS), 18/16 (JOVE MALE MOME), and other different combinations of HOROS with unequal beats.

Among the most popular Bulgarian musical instruments used in folk music today are: the GAJDA (bagpipe), KAVAL (long wood pipe), DUDUK (block pipe), GADULKA (rebec), TAMBURA (a kind of mandolin), and for percussion, the TUPAN (big drum with beating sticks) and the TARABUKA (small hand drum). In the past century, however, instruments like the VIOLIN, CLARINET, TRUMPET, and ACCORDION have appeared in Bulgaria and have been widely used by talented musicians.

The most common hand holds used in Bulgarian line dances are: the NA LESA or NA KOLAN -- when the dancers hold each other by the belt L over R, the Na RAMO position -- shoulder hold and finally NA RAKA -- hands joined at sides.

The RACENICA is also a very popular and widespread folk dance which can be performed solo, in couples, or in a line (HORO-RACENICA). It is considered by many as the liveliest of all Bulgarian dances for in it, dancers can show their greatest skills. It is done by young and old at weddings and general festivities. Every region has its own style of RACENICA. Among the most exciting are the SOP RACENICA in Western Bulgaria where the movements are fast, small, and sharp, and the DOBRUDJAN RACENICA (also called RACENIK), in which the dancers (usually men) are arranged in a line and go through various tricky acrobatic motions.

The dances represented in this unit were selected because of their popularity and continued existence in this country by all generations of Bulgarians. They are the five most popular dances that could be found at any Bulgarian function today. In addition to this, they are also presented in a simple manner because they are intended to be social and recreational rather than performance or stage oriented. Enjoy them!

BULGARIAN RHYTHMS

The question of Bulgarian rhythms has always held great interest for dance scholars, since besides the common, so-called "regular" rhythms (2/4, 4/4, 3/4, etc.) the Bulgarian people relish dances in "irregular" rhythms such as 5/16, 7/8, 11/16, etc. Bela Bartok, the famous Hungarian composer and musicologist, was among the first to note these rhythms in the Balkans and assign them their proper quantitive value. He called them "Bulgarian rhythms." Musicologists who had previously found these rhythms among the people of the Middle East had given them the name aksak, from the Turkish word meaning "limping."

Regular Rhythms

2/4 meter predominates in the area of Balkan dance music as it does the rest of the world over. Often these people will perform highly syncopated steps in this rhythm, giving it a special coloring. Against a brisk 2/4 rhythm they frequently perform unbelieveably complex syncopated patterns of steps, stamps, and pauses. Some of these patterns are eight or more measures in length. Quite common in this area of the world is a three count step pattern taking one measure but counted:

1 2 & (i.e. hold on count one)

instead of the more familiar

1 & 2 (i.e. hold on count two)

3/4 music is practically nonexistent in Bulgarian music. Occasionally what appears to be a 3/4 rhythm is found, however, old-time musicologists and collectors unfamiliar with 7/8 rhythms often noted down such melodies in 3/4 meter, adding various signs to show that one of the beats was subtly held longer than the rest. Hence, older collections show many more melodies in 3/4 than actually existed.

6/8 meter is not too common in Bulgaria. Some of the fast dances the Bulgarians call Pravo horo, seem to be in fast 6/8 rhythms; however, upon closer examination of the actual music, it shows that most often the meter of these dances is compound duple (i.e. 2/4), the melody being a steady series of two triplets per measure.

Irregular Rhythms

The structure of the "irregular" rhythms is based upon various combinations of two-count and three-count units within a single measure, the counts being equal. In the "regular" rhythms, the units within a measure are always the same kind. For example, a 2/4 measure may be divided as follows;

(where both beats have two counts each)

In an irregular rhythm such as 5/16 (called pajdushko rhythm by Bulgarian choreologists) there is one beat of two-counts plus one of three-counts:

The Bulgarian Rechenitza is danced to a 7/16 rhythm consisting of two beats of two counts followed by one beat of three counts:

Bulgarian dances such as Daichovo are in 9/16 rhythm counted:

There are variations of this rhythm as there are for others. For example, the above above 9/16 rhythm may be counted as: one two-count, then a three-count, followed by two more two-counts.

Bulgarian dances such as Kopanitza are in 11/16 rhythm and are counted as follows:

There are many more complex rhythms to be found in Bulgarian dances and music, however, the above are the most common and for the purposes of this publication are sufficient.

Name of Dance: DAICHOVO

Pronounciation: Die-cho-vo

Background: This dance along with the other four presented in this book was and still is one of the most popular of the old dances that immigrants brought with them to this country. It was usually danced in a circle as a horo, however, many of the younger people today do a variation of this dance called ZIZAJ NANE. This variation is danced usually in a line with a belt hold position and is strongly influenced by the dance style in Western Bulgaria, especially the Shopi.

Rhythm The dance is in 9/16 time and it is suggested that the rhythm be practiced as outlined in the appendix. Many will find that the 9/16 rhythm was counted out as 1-2-3-4 may be helpful. Still others may want to assign word symbols to these four counts such as quick-quick-quick-slow.

Tempo: Moderate to fast.

Formation: For dancing the basic Daichovo horo, the hands are joined down at the side and in an open circle. Many times the dancers will raise their joined hands on the count of 1 and lower them by the end of the measure (count 4). For dancing the variation, Zizaj Nane, the dancers grasp the nearest part of their neighbor's belt, with your right arm under and left arm over.

Description:

Measure	count	Movement
1	1(quick)	Hop on Lft, with right foot raised slightly off the ground.
	2(quick)	Step on Rft in place.
	3(quick)	Step on Lft in place.
	4(slow)	Step on Rft in place.
2	--------	Same as measure one, but with opposite footwork.

In doing the horo, the leader may use the following sequence of movements to constantly move the circle to the right.

Measure 1-----Moving with the basic step to right on a slight diagonal toward center.
Measure 2-----Continue moving to right with basic step.
Measure 3-----Continuing with basic step move backwards from center of circle.
Measure 4-----With basic step move to the left

Repeat this sequence as much as desired. The formation of the circle may stay as such or the leader may want to lead the circle around as a chain, winding patterns at his will.

ZIZAJ NANE

This variation lends itself to much participation by all of the dancers in the line. All of the figures are done to the calls of the leader, who is the right end man in the line or circle.

Calls: The calls are all given in the 9/16 rhythm, and a total of four measures is required to do this. The dancers are always dancing the basic step while this is being done. The leader gives the command on the first measure, the dancers respond to his call on the second measure, the leader gives a preparatory call on the third measure, and the dancers give the final call to execute the figure on the fourth measure. On the fifth measure the dancers do the figure. Upon completing any figure, the dancers then return to doing the basic step until a further command.

We will present only three figures here. Following are the calls and the sequence they would be in for the three different figures.

	Figure 1--Chukni	Figure 2--Ritni	Figure 3--frli
9/16 rhythm 1			
9/16 rhythm 1	1---2---3---4---	1---2---3---4---	1---2---3---4---
Leader	---chuk-ni--na--ne	Rit--ni--na--ne--	Fr--li--na--ne--1st meas
Dancers	---Chuk-am--chuk-am	rit-am--rit--am	fr--lam--fr--lam--2nd
Leader	----Aj--de--na--ne	Aj--de--na--ne	Aj--de--na--ne--3rd
Dancers	---A--se---ga--de	A---se--ga--de	A---se--ga--de--4th

Measure	count	movement
Basic step	------	Same as Daichovo Horo
Figure 1---Chukni		
1	-----	Turn to face 1/2 L and stamp Rft beside Lft four times (counts 1,2,3,4)
2	-----	One basic step in place, facing forward, hopping on Lft to begin.
3	-----	Turn to face 1/2 R and stamp Lft beside Rft four times (counts 1,2,3,4)
4	-----	One basic step in place, facing forward, hopping on Rft to begin.
5-8	----------	Repeat measure 1-4.

Figure 2--Ritni

1	1	Facing 1/2 L, Hop on Lft.
	2	Stamp Rft beside Lft, but keep all weight on Lft.
	3	Hop on Lft again.
	4	Stamp Rft beside Lft, and again keep all weight on Lft only.
2	----------	Do basic step facing forward, hopping onLft to begin.
3	----------	Do opposite footwork of measure 1.
4	----------	Do basic step facing forward, hopping on Rft to begin.
5-8	----------	Repeat measure 1-4.

Figure 3--Frli

1	1	Step on Rft in place, kicking Lft forward low to ground (this is a scissors step).
	2	Step on Lft next to Rft, and kick Rft forward.
	3	Step on Rft in same place as count 1, and prepare Lft to extend full length for
	4	hitting the ground with the left heel facing 1/2 L.
2	----------	Opposite footwork of measure 1.
3&4	----------	Repeat measures 1 and 2.

After completing measure 4, your Rft heel is extended to the right and to begin the basic step, you must begin hopping on the Lft.

Name of Dance: ELENO MOME

Pronounciation: Eh-leh-noh Moh-meh

Background: Many have considered this dance to be the most popular horo in Bulgaria between the two World Wars. Since many of the Bulgarian immigrants to America came at this time, it was only natural that this dance would continue its popularity here. There are also many variants to this dance such as some steps with various heel clicks included. It seems that during this period in Bulgaria's history, marching brass bands and men serving in the military seemed to be prevalent, and consequently these type of embellishments occured in the dance.

Rhythm: 7/8. This rhythm is explained in the appendix under 7/16 Ruchenitsa. However, there is a slight difference in its application to this dance because of the accents in the rhythm. One way many people grasp this rhythm for Eleno Mome is to think of the accents of the rhythm as "Slow-slow-quick-slow." This measure is illustrated below:

1 & 2 & 3 & a -----normal counting

* * * * -----accents in the rhythm

S S Q S -----using the slow-slow-quick-slow method

Tempo: Moderate to fast.

Formation: Dancers in open circle, hands joined down at sides. On occasion the hands are raised and lowered on the transition step between going right and left.

Description:

Measure	Count	Movement
1	1 (slow)	Facing diagonally to right, step on Rft to right.
	2 (slow)	Continuing in this direction, step on Lft in front of Rft.
	3 (quick)	Step on Rft to right, turning body to face center.
	& (slow)	Step on Lft in back of Rft.
2	---------	Repeat measure 1
3	---------	Repeat measure 1

Measure	Count	Movement
4	1(slow)	Step on Rft to side (close to Lft)
	2(slow)	Hop on Rft in place, at same time kicking Lft fwd. (you have the option of swinging your arms up and down with this step)
	3(quick)	Step on Lft to Left.
	&(slow)	Step on Rft in back of Lft.
*----------		The following measures 5 and 6 are the exact opposite footwork and direction of measures 1 and 2.
5	1(slow)	Facing diagonally to left. step on Lft to left.
	2(slow)	Continuing in this direction, step on Rft in front of Lft.
	3(quick)	Step on Lft to left, turning body to face center.
	&(slow)	Step on Rft in back of Lft.
6	--------	Repeat measure 5
*----------		Measure 7 is the exact same as measure 4 but with opposite footwork.
7	1(slow)	Step on Lft to side (close to Rft)
	2(slow)	Hop on Lft in place, at same time kicking Rft forward. (you have the option of swinging your arms up and down with this step)
	3(quick)	Step on Rft to right.
	&(slow)	Step on Lft in back of Rft.

The entire dance may be repeated as many times as one prefers. Also some variations that are popular here have to do with the amount of traveling in either direction. As you have noticed in the above version, we travel to the right for three steps, do a transition travel to the left two times, and do a transition. You may vary this, however, and do for example, only two steps traveling to the right and one to the left. In either case, you will find that the circle will slowly move to the right.

Name of Dance: PRAVO HORO

Pronounciation: Prah-voh Hoh-roh

Background: This dance is probably one of the best known dances to Bulgarians living in the United States. It is known under many names--one of the most common being, "Narodno Horo." There are many variations to this dance in the various sections of the country. However, here are presented only those two basic variations which are most popular in the United States.

Rhythm: 2/4

Tempo: Moderate to fast

Formation: The dance is done in an open circle with the leader at the right end of the circle. Hands are joined and held in the extended downward position. Many times the joined hands are swung forward and up and backwards and down as the dance progresses. This usually is at the whim and the spirit of the dancers.

Description:

Measure	Count	Movement
1	1	Facing diagonally right, moving in LOD (Line of Direction) step with Rft.
	2	Hop on Rft.
2	1	Continuing on LOD step on Lft.
	2	Hop on Lft.
3	1	Continuing on LOD step on Rft.
	2	Continuing on LOD step on Lft.
4	1	Continuing on LOD step on Rft.
	2	Hop on Rft, swinging Lft in front of Rft.
5	1	Reversing direction (moving to left) step on Lft.
	2	Continuing in LOD step on Rft.
6	1	Continuing in LOD step on Lft.
	2	Hop on Lft, swinging Rft in front of Lft.

*----------Note that measures 5 and 6 are the opposite footwork and direction of measures 3 and 4.

Continue the pattern until the music ends or the dancers decide to stop. The leader of the dance may wish to keep the dance in a circle formation or he may wish to lead the line in a serpentine way. Since the dance is a traveling dance, i.e. it constantly will move to the right, it lends itself to this kind of serpentining.

Variation: One of the most popular variations for this dance is as follows:

Measure	Count	Movement
1	1 & 2	A fast running step to the right with R,L,R.
2	1 & 2	Continue running steps with L,R,L.
3-6		Same as basic dance.

Name of Dance: PAIDUSHKO HORO

Pronounciation: Pie-doósh-koh Hoh-róh

Background: Paidushko horo is a dance type which is widespread in Bulgaria. Many villages have one or more variants of it, but all are characterized by the 5/16 rhythm and the frequent occurrence of the so called "limping step." This dance is also one of the old dances that the early Bulgarian immigrants brought with them to America and is danced by virtually all Bulgarians.

Rhythm: 5/16. Each measure has two beats, the first having a value of 2/16 and the second having a value of 3/16. The accent is on the second beat. You may find it convenient to count one-TWO, stressing the TWO and holding it a bit longer than the one. You may also want to refer to the appendix regarding instructions on how to count out this rhythm.

Tempo: Moderate

Formation: Dancers in open circle, hands joined down at sides. Like so many of the Bulgarian horos, Paidushko also lends itself to the swinging of the hands to the 5/16 rhythm while dancing. It is suggested for the beginner, however, to master the footwork first.

Description:

Measure	Count	Movement
1	1 (2/16)	Facing left and traveling left, Rft steps to left across in front of Lft.
	2 (3/16)	Lft steps to left.
2		Repeat measure one again.
3		Repeat measure one again.
4	1 (2/16)	Facing center, hop in place on Lft with Rft slightly off ground.
	2 (3/16)	Still facing center step on Rft in place.
5	1 (2/16)	Still facing center, hop in place on Rft with Lft slightly off ground.
	2 (3/16)	Still facing center, step on Lft in place.
6	1 (2/16)	Step across Lft with Rft with body slightly bent and facing left.
	2 (3/16)	Step on Lft in place and straightening body at same time to face center.

7	1(2/16)	Hop on Lft traveling to right and facing right.
	2(3/16)	Step on Rft continuing to travel to right.
8	1(2/16)	Hop on Rft traveling to right.
	2(3/16)	Step on Lft continuing to travel to right.
9		Repeat measure 7.
10		Repeat measure 8.

This is the pattern for the step one time through. Immediately upon completing measure 10, the body should sharply turn to the left and the dance begins again with measure one from the beginning.

The above sequence of steps seem to be the most popular with Bulgarians in the United States, although there are so many, many variants of this dance. The above sequence can be danced with any Paidushko music.

Name of Dance: RUCHENITSA

Pronounciation: Ruh-che-ni-tsa

Background: If there were to be a dance named as the national dance of the Bulgarians, it would be this one. It is danced in absolutely every area of the country, and no social or dance event would be complete without it. It can be danced in a circle with just a basic step; it can be danced in lines with many variations of figures; and it also can be danced as a solo dance or couple dance. This last feature may also add to its popularity, since it is probably the only Bulgarian dance that gives the freedom of individual expression.

Rhythm: 7/16. This meter is described in the appendix of illustrations on rhythms.

Tempo: Varies in different parts of the country from deliberate to fast.

Formation: For dancing the horo-ruchenitsa, hands are joined and down at the sides. However, the arms may swing up and down at the whim of the dancers.

For dancing the Ruchenitsa "na lesa" which means in a line with a belt hold, the dancers grasp the nearest part of the neighbor's belt, with your R arm under and L arm over. This can be a line with only men, only women, or mixed.

Description: Horo-Ruchenitsa
The basic step for the Horo Ruchenitsa is a basic pas de basque with a slight modification on the third count. As the dancer is dancing RLR, LRL, RLR, LRL, etc. and counting the step as 1-2-3, 1-2-3, etc. with the longer count being the three because of the nature of the 7/16 rhythm, there seems to be a slight suspension of movement therefore on the three count. The basic step can be danced on full foot, flat footed, on the toes, or just about any way the dancer feels. In Bulgaria the style of this dance varies quite considerably from region to region. Also because it is done as a solo dance, the variances on the basic step are countless.

In doing the horo, the leader may use the following sequence of movements to constantly move the circle to the right.

Measure 1----Moving with basic step to right on a slight diagonal twd center.
Measure 2----Continue moving to right with basic step.
Measure 3----With basic step move backwards from center of circle.
Measure 4----With basic step move to the left.

Repeat this sequence as much as desired. The formation of the circle may stay as such or the leader may want to lead the circle around as a chain winding patterns at his will.

Na Lesa Ruchenitsa

The example of a ruchenitsa danced in a line is the dance KOPCETO. The rhythm is naturally the same as any other ruchenitsa. The version presented in this book is very simplified and only three figures of the dance are presented.

Measure	Count	Movement
Figure 1----------		Basic figure
1	1 & 2	Facing diagonally L, bounce on both feet twice (count 1 & 2)
	3	Then step backward in line of direction with a step on Left foot.
2		Repeat measure 1.
3, 4, 5		Face straight toward center and do three light pas-de-basques on balls of feet with a slight prancing style: RLR, LRL. RLR.
6	1	Still facing center, hop on Rft moving sidewards L, at same time kicking Lft quickly across in front.
	2	Step Lft sideways to left.
	3	Step Rft across in front of Lft.
7	1	Hop sideways left on Rft again.
	2	Step Lft sideways with Lft.
	3	Step Rft behind Lft.
8	1	Bring Lft from out to the L to close with Rft, taking weight on both.
	2	Bounce on both again.
	3	Shift weight entirely onto Lft in place, sending Rft a short way out to R side.
9		Same as measure 8 but with opposite footwork.
10		Same as measure 8, but step forward toward center with Lft on count 3 rather than in place.
Figure 2----------		Forward four and backward four.
1	1 & 2	With weight on Lft and with right thigh almost horizontal, right lower leg perpendicular, hop forward twice on Lft (counts 1 & 2)

Figure 2

	3	Step forward on right foot, raising left leg into position, right leg just held.
2	1 & 2	Hop forward twice on Rft with left leg in this position.
	3	Step forward on Lft.
3 & 4		Same as measure 1 and 2 continuing to move forward.
5,6,7,8		Same movements as measures 1-4, but moving back to place.

Figure 3 Kicks

1 - 4		Do four forwards as you did in measures 1 - 4 of Figure 2.
5	1	Standing on Lft, bring right knee up in the air, lower right leg is perpendicular.
	2	Pause briefly in this position.
	3	Kick right foot forward, lowering right knee slightly.
6	1	Step onto Rft in place. raising left knee up in air, lower left leg perpendicular.
	2	Pause briefly in this position.
	3	Kick Lft forward, lowering left knee slightly.
7	1	Hop in place on Rft.
	2	Take small step left with Lft.
	3	Step Rft across in front of Lft.
8	1	Return weight to Lft in its own place (to the back and right where Rft now is)
	2	Step Rft beside Lft.
	3	Step on Lft across in front of Rft.
9	1	Return weight to Rft in its own place (to the back and left of where Lft now is)
	2	Step on Lft beside Rft.
	3	Step on Rft across in front of Lft.
10		Repeat measure 8

The above three figures may be done as many times as the leader wishes and can be done in any sequence.

HOW TO LEARN IRREGULAR RHYTHMS

The following guide may be of help to students in mastering these rhythms. It is suggested that you use the recording for dances that is a part of this kit. You will be able to use the following bands on the record to practice your slap patterns:

5/16 - Paidushko

7/16 - Ruchenitsa

7/16 - Eleno Mome

2/4 - Pravo Horo

9/16 - Daichovo Horo

First, make sure you understand theoretically what is going on in an irregular measure; what makes these rhythms difficult for the beginner is the use of the three-count units added or "tucked into" the pattern.

Second, sit on a chair with feet together on the floor so that you can use your lap as a drumming board, and place your left hand, palm down, on the left thigh, and your right hand on your right thigh.

Third, count out a series of 2/4 measures, slapping left thigh on the beat and the right thigh on the off-beat;

```
1 & 2 &  1 & 2 & etc.
L r L r  L r L r
```

Fourth, count out a 3/4 rhythm, slapping left thigh on the first beat and the right thigh on the second and third.

```
1 2 3  1 2 3  etc.
L r r  L r r
```

Practice the above two patterns separately for awhile until you are no longer conscious of your hands, but only of the rhythms.

Now try a simple five-count rhythm, consisting of one beat of two counts followed by one beat of three-counts.

```
  1      2
1 &    2 & a   etc.
L r    L r r
```

The important thing here is to make sure that every count has the same value: don't "squeeze" the three-count unit into the same amount of time that you did the two-count; And don't pause an extra count after doing the three-count before hitting the beginning of the next measure. If you have a metronome, use it, but for the first few practices don't look at it--just listen!

As this five-count becomes easy and more natural, start to put more emphasis on the left hand slaps and reduce the right hand slap to a silent pat. When you get to the point where all you hear when an orchestra is playing Paidushko horo. Once you have mastered this five-count rhythm you can go on to others.

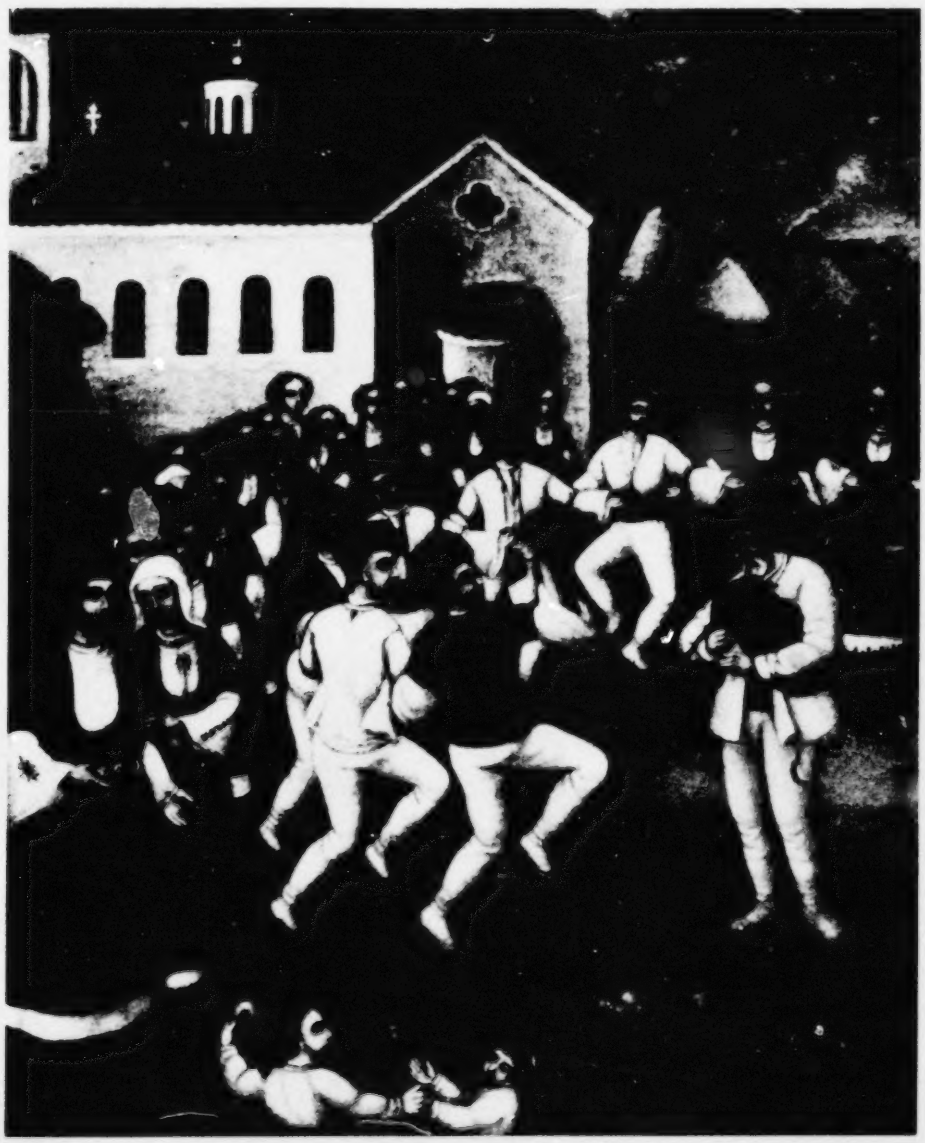
Here are additional slap patterns:

Daichovo Horo 9/16

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & a
L r L r L r L r r etc.

Ruchenitsa 7/16

1 & 2 & 3 & a
L r L r L r r



BULGARIA

ROMANIA
NORTH WEST BULGARIA
NORTH BULGARIA
DOBRUDZHA
BLACK SEA
Balkan Mountains
YUGOSLAVIA
SHOPE
WESTERN THRACE
EASTERN THRACE
STRANDZHA
PIRIN
RHODOPES
TURKEY
GREECE
България